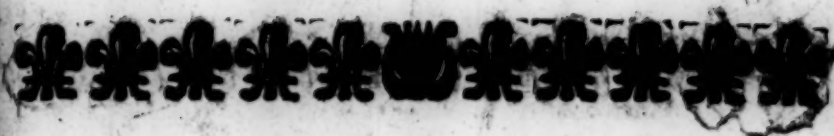


To the Rev. Mr. [unclear]
Colmon

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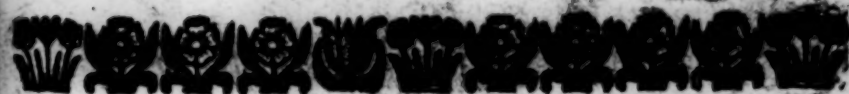
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A

Sacramental Discourse

February 3. 1727.





Document of Discharge

February 3. 1757.



14
*Parents and grown Children
should be together at the
Lord's Table.*

A
S E R M O N
Before the
S A C R A M E N T,
at the Fryday Lecture
in *Brattle-Street, Boston.*

By Benjamin Colman.

*Deut. VI. 6, 7. And these words which I
command thee this day shall be in thy
heart ; and thou shalt teach them diligent-
ly unto thy children ; and shalt talk of
them when thou sittest in thy house, and
when thou walkest by the way, and when
thou liest down, and when thou risest up.*

B O S T O N, Printed for **S. GERRISH,** at
the lower end of Cornhill. 1727.

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Parents and Children *at the Table of CHRIST.*

LUKE II. 41, 42.

Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover; and when He was twelve years old they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.

IT is a sweet and pleasant Chapter before us, fill'd with a grateful variety respecting the birth and circumcision of our Lord Jesus, and his presentation in the Temple; how the *multitudes of the heavenly Hosts* praised God on the one occasion, and how *Simeon* and *Anna* spake of him on the other.

IN the verse before my text we have a short account of the infancy and childhood of our Lord, ver. 40. *And the child grew, and waxed strong*

strong in spirit, filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon him. This was indeed as became the *Son of God*: || “ That whereas other children are *weak* in understanding and resolution He was *strong* in spirit ; whereas other children have *foolishness* bound up in their hearts, which appears in all they say and do, He was filled with *wisdom* ; and whereas the *corruption* of nature early and strongly appears in other children, nothing but the *grace* of God appear'd in him ”.

“ MY text begins the *only* passage of story recorded concerning our blessed Lord, from his infancy to the day of his shewing to *Israel*, at 29 years of age ”. The *parents* of our Lord *Jesus* are the persons here spoken of ; *Joseph* so reputed and called, and *Mary* his holy mother. The thing related of them is very worthy and honourable ; namely, their constant annual journey to *Jerusalem* at the feast of the *passover*. This was required of the *males* by the law of *Moses*, but the women were excused. Yet they that would attended, and the Mother of Christ was too devout not to do it. She was strong in body, as well as in spirit, by the favour of God, and was as constant at the feast as her gracious husband. (A feast which had most of Gospel in it, and to which she was more related than she knew of ; her holy Son being the *lamb of God*, the great Antitype of all the *paschal* lambs.) Such (says Mr.

|| Mr. Henry on the place.

Burkit)

Burkit) as will go no further than they are forc'd in religious exercises, are strangers to the *Virgins* piety and devotion.

BUT here is *one* particular year specified when *Jesus* went up with them to the feast. It was when he was *twelve* years old. It is not said that he had not gone up with them any year before that : it may be this was not the *first* time ; as doubtless it was not the *last*, tho' it be the only time we read of.

“ THE *Jews* tell us that at *thirteen* year old a child was reputed with them a *Son of the commandment* : that is to say, obliged to the duties of *adult Church-membership* ; having been from his infancy and circumcision a *Son of the covenant*”. Now *Jesus* in his childhood being so much in wisdom and spirit above his years, we may well suppose that ere this time he had been at the *passover*. But this time is recorded and not the rest, for the sake of that wonderful conference which he now had with the *Doctors* in the Temple.

I might offer many profitable *Notes* and *Observations* from the text, but shall select *four* only to speak to.

1. THAT the constant devout observation of the feast of the *Passover*, was strictly required of the *Jews*.

2. THAT the religious among them were very *strict* in the observation of it, and of the other religious feasts, statutes and ordinances of that dispensation.

3. THAT

3. THAT *parents* should take care to go before their children in the observation of Divine institutions.

4. THAT *children* should be early in the worship of God ; and in their preparation for an approach to the table of Christ.

I. THAT *the constant and devout observation of the passover was strictly required of the Jews.*

THREE times in a year they were to keep a feast unto the Lord ; when all their males were to appear before him. Exod. 23. 14, 17. This was a statute for *Israel* and a law of the God of *Jacob*. The feast of *unleavened bread* which was the *passover*, was the first and chief of these *three great festivals*. It was instituted to the children of *Israel* upon the day of their coming out of *Egypt*, to be a standing memorial to them thro'out their generations of their deliverance & redemption. Exod. 12. 14. *This day shall be unto you for a memorial, and ye shall keep it a feast unto the Lord thro'out your generations ; you shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.* Deut. 16. 3. *That thou mayst remember the day wherein thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life.*

THE omission or neglect of this institution was very severely threatned by God. Num. 9. 13. *But the man that is clean and not in a journey, and forbeareth to keep the passover, even the same soul shall be cut off from his people : because he brought not the offering of the Lord in*

his

his appointed season, that man shall bear his sin. Nothing could excuse a jew from this appointed service, but his being under some legal uncleanness which rendred him unfit for it; or his being sick or in a journey which made it impracticable for him to be at the Lord's place: And in this case it was provided, that such a person should keep the passover a month after the appointed time. So carefully did the law provide against the omission of the duty required. Numb. 9. 10, 11. *If any man of you, or of your posterity shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or be in a journey afar off, yet he shall keep the passover unto the Lord; the fourteenth day of the second month, at even, shall they keep it.* And the ordinance was the same for the stranger, a proselyte of the jewish religion, as for him that was born in the land. Num. 9. 14. Only the profanation or careless performance of this holy service was also as strictly forbidden and severely condemned: Levit. 7. 20. *The soul that eateth of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace offerings that pertain unto the Lord, having his uncleanness upon him, even that soul shall be cut off from his people.* And yet where there was a preparation of heart, and something unavoidable hinder'd the exact ceremonial purifications which the law prescribed, and which the worshipper would have complied with if he could; in such a case (upon extraordinary occasions) the gracious God sometimes excused the want of legal purification, and accepted the worshipper and his

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service : As it was the case of many of the people in *Hezekiah's* great passover. 2 Chron. 30. 18. *A multitude of the people out of Ephraim, Issachar and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves ; yet did they eat the passover otherwise than it was written : but Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary : And the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah and healed the people.*

THUS strictly has God always required of his people *obedience* to his positive laws, and the careful *observation* of his statutes and ordinances.

I will not now go into the *reasons* of this severity of the Law in these injunctions. It might be said,

1. SUCH positive laws, statutes and ordinances are the high declarations of God's *dominion* and sovereignty, his absolute *will* and authority ; and He will be obey'd and ought to be so. It is indignity and rebellion for us to hesitate or delay when we know his will.

2. THEY are the instances of that *open honour* and publick acknowledgement, which as a *church* and people of God we render to him ; whereby he is confessed in solemn and stated manner, glorified before others, and all are provoked to glorify him.

3. THEY

3. **THEY** are standing memorials of his *grace* favour and mercy to a people, of his *presence* among them and of his *covenant* with them.

AND to the people of God they are the ordained *signs* and appointed *means* of their sacred covenanting with God, and special communion with Him.

BUT there needs no more to be said than this, *What if God will? and who shall say to him, what dost thou?* He never ask'd his creature what law he should give him. And whatever it be, 'tis to be sure holy and just. And the penalty in case of disobedience can be no less than excision from God; which is to say everlasting infinite misery.

NOW that which remains is to bring home this matter to *our selves*, and argue from the *Lord's passover* under the law, unto his *holy supper* under the gospel. For certainly these *two sacramental rites* or actions do bear a great affinity likeness and relation one to the other; and what the one was to the church under the *law*, such the other is to it under the *gospel*. And it is very manifest in the institution of the *Lord's Supper*, as from the nature of the thing, so from the time and circumstances of it, that it comes in the place and room of the *passover*; by the will of Him who is the Lord our passover sacrificed for us. And our Lord *Jesus* has positively and absolutely required of us both the observation and sanctification of this ordinance of the *Supper*, as he did enjoin that of the *passover*

under the law. It is his special law to us now, as much as that was to them by the hand of *Moses*. He has said to us, *This do ye in remembrance of me* : And his *Apostle* has said to us, *I received of the Lord*, that which I delivered unto you, *that the Lord Jesus* the same night in which he was betrayed *took bread &c.* It is therefore called the *Lord's table* and the *Lord's supper*. His authority has appointed it, and it is a standing memorial of his *love*, a publick and perpetual *honour* to his name ; and to us the stated sign and means of our *covenanting* and communion with him.

AND if these things be so, then what can we think or say, in excuse of the easie *neglect* and *careless* observation of this ordinance among *Christians* ? Will not the *Lord Christ* as much enquire after and require for *this* thing among us, as he did of old among his people about the *passover* ? Certainly he will. And the *Apostle* therefore says all those awful words on this occasion, *I Corin. 11. ult. Let a man examine himself and so let him eat of this bread and drink of this cup : for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh judgment to himself : for this cause many are weak and sickly among you and many sleep : for if we would judge our selves we should not be judged.*

THE sum then is, That people should not dare to live in the *neglect* of the *Lord's table*, as they commonly do ; and that they should be very *devout* and *spiritual*, very *careful* and *serious* in the observation of it : as the Jews

of old were obliged to be very constant and careful in their attendance on the *passover* feast.

II. MY next note is, *That the Religious among the Jews were very strict and exact in the observation of the passover, and other positive ordinances of the law of Moses.*

MY text informs us that the parents of Christ were so: *Every year they went up at the feast of the passover, and they fulfilled the days, and performed all things according to the law of the Lord.*

“ NO difficulties hinder’d their attendance; they came up *early* to it, and *staid* all the time of it. Neither *Joseph’s* calling, nor the blessed *Virgins* household business could keep them at home, nor hasten ‘em home, before the service was entirely over. All worldly business must give place to divine offices, and we must attend God’s service to the end of it, if we would carry away the blessing ||

IT is indeed no evidence of the *truth* of grace to frequent the publick assemblies; yet it is an infallible sign of the *want* of grace customarily to neglect them. We read of the holy parents of *John the Baptist*, namely *Zecharias* and *Elizabeth*, that they were both *righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless.* This is a high and happy account of husband

|| *Mr. Burkitt in loc.*

and

and wife, and it should be said of every married couple : If they *would* be righteous before God they should be walking together in all the ordinances of the Lord blameless ; and if they *are* righteous before God they will do so. Such a happy pair were *Elkanah* and *Hannah* ; they went up yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the Lord of Hosts in *Shiloh* : so they did year by year, 1Sam. 1. 3, 7. Indeed multitudes did thus attend the yearly feasts in *Israel* who were not pious people, and some who were irreligious did no doubt neglect them, but all that were pious went up to the solemn feasts. *David* sings of their doing so in some of his most pleasant psalms : Psal. 42. & 122. I was glad when they said to me, let us go into the house of the Lord : our feet shall stand within thy gates, O *Jerusalem* ! whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of *Israel*, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord : For I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise ; with a multitude that kept holy day.

THE reflections which now naturally occur to us are such as these. How comes it to pass that we *Christians* are not as careful and exact, as constant and conscientious in attending on the ordinance of the Lord's supper ; as the *Jews* were in the observation of the *passover* and other ordinances of the law ? Should not a People professing the name of *Christ* shew their reverend and religious regard to the memorial of his death ? and should not people of

of gravity and seriousness in the christian Church hold themselves bound and tied up by the command of their *dying Saviour*? For if the *Law* given by *Moses* was reverend and awful, is it not yet more so when the *Son of God* himself is come, and has spoken to us? And are not his last will and words, just before he died, memorable indeed and sacred? When God told *Moses* of a *Prophet like to him*, but greater, whom he would raise up to his people, and put his word in his mouth; he added — *And whosoever will not hearken to my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.* Now make the application in this particular instance. The great Prophet of the church has come and spoken to us in the name of God, and one of his last words was this, *Do this in remembrance of me*: and if we do not hearken to these words which He has spoken to us, God says he will require it: and when he requires an account of us, why we did it not, what shall we answer? we must be speechless.

HEAR what the *Apostle* says on this head thro' his epistle to the *Hebrews*: *Therefore (a) we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip: For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; how shall we escape if we neglect so great salva-*

(a) Heb. 2. 1, 2, 3.

sion;

tion ; which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard it. Wherefore holy brethren, (b) partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and high priest of our profession Christ Jesus, who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this Man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, — who verily was faithful as a servant, — but Christ as a Son over his own house : — wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if you will hear his voice. Let us therefore fear (c) lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. Take heed, brethren, lest (d) there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God : But exhort one another daily while it is called to day, lest any of you be hardened thro' the deceitfulness of sin. Having therefore, (e) brethren, boldness to enter in the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he has consecrated for us thro' the veil, that is to say his flesh ; and having an high priest over the house of God ; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith ; having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed as with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, — not forsaking the assembling of our selves together as the manner of some is ; — for if we sin wilfully after we have received the

(b) Heb. 3. 1, 2, 3, &c. (c) Chap. 4. 1. (d) Chap. 3. 12, 13. (e) Chap. 10. 19, 20, &c.

knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins. He that despised Moses law died without mercy ; of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God — ? See then that ye refuse not Him that speaketh, (f) for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven. But as we receive a kingdom which cannot be moved (the gospel-dispensation which is to remain for ever) let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear ; for our God is a consuming fire. Let us go forth unto Him, which suffered without the gate, (g) bearing his reproach : by Him let us offer the sacrifice of praise unto God continually, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.

THIS is the strain of that excellent Epistle to the Hebrews. It calls upon the Christian church to be as observant of the Institutions of Christ, as the Jewish ever were of the law of Moses : It shows that our obligations rise higher than theirs, and that it will be worse in us and for us to be inobservant, than it ever was in them, or will be for them in the day of judgment.

I will only add two more reflections here,

I. THAT we be caution'd not to rest ourselves in the meer outward observation of God's ordinances, as the Jews generally did : and as

(f) Heb. 12. 25, 26 &c. (g) Chap. 13. 13, 14.

the generality of christians do thro' *Christendom* at this day : But let us remember that as he *was not a Jew that was one outwardly in the flesh,* so he only is a *Christian* that is one inwardly, and baptism is *that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God,* Rom. 2. 29. And again, let us remember the same *Apostle's words,* Phil. 3. 3. *We are the circumcision that worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.*

2. REMEMBER that instead of doing *less* than what the law of God requires of us in outward observations, we should rather do *more.* I mean not by *inventions* of our own, or in way of *addition* to the commandments of God ; but in the devout *observation* of those which God has appointed. As in the *text ;* altho' *Mary* was not obliged by the law to go up yearly to the passover with her husband ; yet the law permitting her to go she gladly went, as *Hannah* and other holy women were wont to do before her.

AND thus the *first Christians* having received the law of *Christ* about his *Supper* (the *breaking of bread* in remembrance of his *broken body*) they not only *stedfastly continued* in this doctrine and fellowship of the *Apostles,* but they did it *daily, from house to house,* with a single and joyful heart, Acts 2. 42, 46. As often as they came together it seems to have been to break bread ; the *Lord's day* & the *Lord's Supper met together : Acts 20. 7. Upon the first*

first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached.

GOD has not tied us up to so many precise times, just how often to pray, and hear and communicate : We should be sure then rather to go beyond the law, than to come short of its injunctions, in the discharging of these duties. And if so, then when the gospel says, *As often as ye eat this bread,* (which supposes we do it often) what will they say to themselves, who have never *once* done it ?

BUT this for the *second Note*, That the *religions* among the *Jews* were constant and devout in the strict observation of the *passover* : *Every year they went up at the feast,* and took care to do every thing *after the custom of the feast*. The next *Note* that I would offer is this,

III. *THAT* parents should go before their children in the observation of the holy Institutions of God in his worship. So did the gracious Parents in the text ; and if they had had a family of children and servants to have learn'd of them, their laudable example would have well instituted them in the observation of the passover. And truly so ought Christian parents to lead their households to the *table of Christ*, and in the reverend sanctification of the *Sabbath*, and a religious observation of all the Ordinances of God's house.

THE word of God requires parents *diligently to teach their children the will and ways of*

God, as well as to have the same always in their own hearts, Deut. 6. 6, 7. And when the passover was first appointed to the Children of Israel, it was accompanied with this precept to them, Exod. 13. 8, 14. *And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which the Lord did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt: And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thy eyes; that the Lord's law may be in thy mouth; for with a strong hand hath the Lord brought thee out of Egypt.*

CHILDREN naturally enquire and learn of their parents; but more of their examples as they grow up than they do of their precepts. If then it be the duty of parents to teach by words, it is more their duty to teach by their practice and good example. If they should take pains to instruct them in the reasons of God's laws, and in the meaning of his ordinances, and require them to observe the same, much more should they teach and lead 'em by their own example. For with what face or with what efficacy can a parent tell his son, that Christ has required such a duty and service, and as he grows up he must be sure to observe it; and yet let his child see that he lives in the neglect of that duty himself. It is incumbent therefore on parents, that they teach and lead their children in the worship of God by their own example; that they go before them in the reverend observation of his holy institutions.

SO did *Abraham*: He first circumcised himself, and then his son, and his household: And this is the honour done him by God; *Gen. 18. 19. I know Abraham that he will command his children and household after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord.* He could command them with authority & efficacy when he first obeyed himself: his words had not else come with power and been receiv'd with reverence.

DAVID could with authority instruct his son in the ordinances of God, because he himself was so great a lover of them, so devout an observer of them. His being a King did not give so much power to his words as his being a Saint. *Prov. 4. 3. I was my fathers son, tender and only beloved in the sight of my mother; he taught me also and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words, keep my commandments and live.*

SO the *Apostle* taught the Churches effectually; *Phil. 4. 9. These things which ye have both learned and received, and heard and seen in me do; and the God of peace shall be with you.*

SO *Christ* taught his family, and all that are his ought so to teach theirs. *John 13. 15. I have given you an example.*

WHEREFORE let parents first take heed to themselves, and then take care of their children. For if they require their children to reverence the Institutions of God and do not observe the same themselves, perhaps their children will soon lose all reverence both to God and them. Or if parents say nothing to their

their children about the matter, as it is likely they will not, then the honour their children do naturally bear *them* will tempt them to make light of the dishonour done to God in the neglect of his ordinances.

LET those parents consider this who live in the neglect of the *Lord's supper* in the sight of their children. Think you, that they do not observe and mind it? Yes, and will be ready to take any licence which your example gives them. It ought therefore to be a tender argument with parents to be religious for the sake of their *children*: for next to their own *Souls* are these. But if men will not be prevail'd on for the sake of their *own* souls, how should they by being pleaded with for the children of their bowels? It is to be fear'd that parents who do not come to the *Lord's table*, do not speak at all to their children about preparing for it: or if they do it can be with little force.

BUT the injury is greater to God, who gives us our children with this charge, to bring them up for *Him*; and intrusts us with them as so many living souls which are more *His* than ours. And if we fondly love their little bodies, but are negligent of their precious souls, as it is a brutal and irreligious thing in us, so he will require it of us; as he did of his people of old: Ezek. 16. 20. *Thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast born unto Me, and those hast thou sacrificed to*
thine

rhine idols, to be devoured : thou hast slain my children.

THE most unnatural wrong we can do to our children is to neglect and hurt their *souls*: And this is one of the greatest wrongs we can do to God, who challenges a special property in our children; and therefore he has appointed us that as soon as they are born we do give them up to him, and bind our selves to educate them for him. O the pitiless as well as profane hearts of those parents that neglect their own and their childrens souls! they in effect sacrifice 'em to devils after they have devored them to God! they rob God of his children, and rob them of their title to God and his covenant blessings.

Finally, WHAT an *unnatural precept* and direction must be given to the children of such parents, who live in the open neglect of the ordinances of Christ? How hard is it to be forc'd to say to your children, — and yet we must say it — *Do not learn of your parents in this thing!* do not imitate 'em; they do wrong, very wrong, and you must not follow them. This would be *harsh* kind of doctrine, and must needs sound so in the ears both of parents and children. Yet if parents will live in the neglect of the Lord's ordinances, we must speak thus to their children. “Do not think to excuse your selves by your parents example, how much so ever you love and honour them: It will not do in the day of Christ: the soul that sins shall die; the soul of

of the father and the soul of the son: Ezek. 18:

4. You must mourn for your parents in the case supposed and pray for them; and you may reverently ask of them the cause and reason of their neglect, and beseech them to lead you to all the ordinances of Christ; but if you prevail not on them be not discouraged yourself, and restrained from doing your duty.

BUT this for the third Note: Parents should go before their children in the observation of the institutions of Divine worship.

IV. CHILDREN ought to be early in the Worship of God, and preparing for the Table of Christ.

THIS is taught us by our Lord's example in the text: the Child Jesus when he was twelve years old; went up with Joseph and Mary to the feast of the passover. And we read that he tarried behind in Jerusalem, and when they found him it was in the Temple, and when they reasoned with him upon his staying there his answer was, *Wist ye not that I must be about my Fathers business?*

CERTAINLY the holy Child Jesus is here exhibited as an example to children and young people; to teach and require them to give God an early possession of their souls, and in their youth to keep close to his worship and service. "Especially such children as are forward in other things, should be put forward in religion". It is the pleasure of Christ and much for his honour, that children should be betimes in the temple, and that

that young people should be at his table.

IN the 22. *verse* of the *chapter* we read how the parents of our Lord *Jesus* brought him in his early infancy to present him in the temple, and to offer as the law required: And now in the *text* we find him coming in his early youth to the temple, to dedicate himself to the Lord in his appointed way. So those of our children that are in their infancy dedicated to God in baptism, should be call'd upon as they grow up to come to the *Gospel passover*; the Lord's supper, and joyn themselves to the Lord and his Church by their own act and deed. But let them take care to do it with knowledge and seriousness.

SOME children may much sooner be admitted to the table of Christ than others. Do thou *child* desire to be among the first; the most ripe, the most ready. Therefore learn diligently, and seek to God earnestly: get forward in Christ's School: be not the least and last there: enter thy self betimes, and learn now in thy learning age.

A great part of the duty of baptised children is to look forward to the Lord's table, and to keep their eye upon it; saying often to themselves, "I have been given up to Christ in baptism, and I must be preparing to give my self up to him at his table.

AND a great part of the duty of parents lies in *this*, to instill this consideration into the tender hearts of their children, so bring
D
them

them on to the recognition of their covenant engagements at the table of Christ. But not to do it lightly, cursorily & as a thing of form; but intelligently, deliberately & awfully: as David taught & charg'd his son, 1 Chron. 28. 9. *And thou Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart & with a willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him he will be found of thee, but if thou forsake him he will cast thee off for ever.*

THIS is a point of great care, and calls for much concern and labour; and most parents are great strangers to this religious watch over their children: It is evident by their not coming themselves to the table of Christ, and by the neglect of their households: and yet they know this to be the least they owe unto Christ, to their own souls, and to the souls of their family.

BUT if this be the duty of *parents*, then *children* owe it as much unto Christ, unto their parents and to their own souls, to learn God's will betimes, to get knowledge & understanding in the holy ways of God, and to live unto Him who made them, who also has bought and bound them to be his. And you, *children*, that are consecrated to God in *baptism*, who are instructed in the word and law of God, and your obligations to him, by parents & ministers; be you exhorted and warned to be early in your choice of God and of his ways.

AND

AND now to close all, *Let parents and grown children be together exberied, to be found together at the Lord's table.* What is there more fit, and what could be more pleasant than this? *Parents, go your selves to the Lord's passover, as the parents of Christ did: And children come with your parents: or if they neglect themselves come you before them; don't stay for 'em.* Or if they do not put you upon this duty as they should, remember that your Ministers put you in mind of it, and that you are now admonished thereof.

MAY the Lord *Jesus* teach and incline you by his *holy Spirit*. May you be such as he was in his childhood and youth; such to God, such to your parents, and such to his church. That if you die young you may like *Abel* and *Enoch* be taken up to God: or if you live in the world you may be examples to others, fruitful Christians, full of goodness, full of good works, to the honour of Christ, and the edification of others: Like good *Obadiab*, fearing the Lord from your youth, and like gracious *Timothy*, betimes knowing in the scriptures and wise to salvation.

I will urge what has been said both to elder and younger persons, only with one motive.

WE are all dying and going to judgment, we know not which first, whether the parent or the child. The graves are ready for us, and are not we ready, should we not be ready for the table of Christ? We are dropping into the

grave every week, some elder people and many younger ; and should we not be quickened to be getting into Christ, that we may be found in him, let death come as soon and as *suddenly* to us, as it has done to others.

PARENTS and children are both dying, and are alike concerned to be getting ready for a dying hour ; let them take the *table of Christ* in their way, there to set their souls *in order* for their going to him, and for their being *found of their Judge in peace*.

LOOK into the *Congregation of the dead* and see how they ly *mixt*, here a parent and there his children ; here an aged person, and there divers in their youth, and more in their childhood : read the inscriptions on the grave-stones and see how many under twenty and thirty to one above fifty or sixty ly interr'd there ; their spirits gone to God that gave them, and into a most blessed or miserable Eternity . And shall it not be thus in the *Congregation of the living* and at the Lord's *table* ? which has so particular an aspect on the second appearance of Christ, and on our preparation for a solemn appearance before Him, to give an account to him, and to hear our sentence from the mouth of the *Lamb* ? Are not the *funerals* of every week, month and year so mixt ? parents following their children to the grave, *the house appointed for all the living*, and children following their parents ? and while they live together in this dying world, shall they not come together into one place to eat the
Lord's

Lord's Supper? How strangely then must we suppose that they *both* forget that they are dying away, they know not which *first*, and that *after death is the judgment?*

LET parents and children both consider, that their *souls* are alike precious, & *eternity* is before them: that *all souls* are Christ's, *the soul of the Father and the soul of the son*: that Christ has given his *life* a ransom for both, has shed his *blood* for both, and has extended his *covenant* unto both; commanding his ministers to *feed both, his sheep and his lambs*; that in the spirit of *Elias* they should labour to *turn the hearts of fathers and children* together to himself, to *make ready a people prepared for the Lord*; lest he come and *smite the earth with a curse*. See Mal. 4. 6. and Luk. 1. 17.

I scruple not to say, that in the last & most dreadful sense *Death* is that curse, which *devours the earth*; the *bodies* of all, old & young; and the *souls* of all that will not be a people made ready for the Lord: for his glory service and worship here, and for his table kingdom and glory for ever.

O Parent! look on thy self and thine as *mortal*, and going to an eternal judgment, and so govern thy self toward them. You are your self hastning to the *Tribunal* of Christ; but have you taken care of a never dying *soul* for which Christ has died? And what care of the precious souls of an immortal *offspring*? You expect to die before your children, and naturally desire to leave them behind you; or to be

be sure you must soon follow 'em to the *bar* of God : But what account do you think of rendering to God of them ?

WILL not the two first enquiries put to thee by God the Father of Spirits be *these*, What care thou hast taken of thy *own* soul, and what of the souls of the *children* which he has given thee ? how then can you think of dying your selves, or of your childrens dying, without being able to give an account with joy and not with grief ?

AND you know not whether God will continue you another week or day to yours, or *them* to you ; what therefore your hand *findeth* to do, do it with all thy might, for there is no wisdom or working in the grave whither thou art going. It may be you are *cumbring* your selves about many things for yours that are to live after you, but *one thing is needful*, your own soul and theirs : chuse the *good part* that can never be taken from you, nor you from that. Remember the care of the good mother for her *two* sons : Mat. 20. 21. and dropping the infirmity, let us improve her piety and imitate her wisdom : *Lord, that my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand and the other on thy left in thy kingdom.* Had she liv'd in our days her desire and care would have been to have seen them both, with her, at the *Table* of Christ, in the way to his *Kingdom*.

AND what should our *Children* now say unto themselves, or unto us, upon the present discourse ? Should they not take up the *answer* of

of our Lord *Jesus* (in our context) to his *parents*, when they had sought him sorrowing, and at last found him in the *Temple*, among the *Doctors*, *Wist you not that I should be about my Fathers business ?* Yes, you should be early about the great business of your souls, *the working out your salvation, the making your calling and election sure.* And therefore you must be early in the temple of God, waiting daily at *wisdoms-gates*, and coming to the *special ordinances* of the gospel. And the younger you come, if it be intelligently and affectionately, with understanding and grace, in the fear of God and from love to him ; you will be the more *welcome* and the more *beloved* of Christ : like *John* the youngest disciple, and *him whom Jesus loved*, who leaned on his *bosome* at his last passover supper.

AND now, Brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. That both parents and children may happily meet at the *Table* of Christ here, and in his *Kingdom* hereafter : That in the day of Christ, we may be able to say to Him, and He may say of us and ours unto his Father, *Behold I and the children which thou hast given me.*

F I N I S

of the Lord (in the context) to his
table, when I had taught him following
and at last found him in the Temple, among
the doctors. With you, I should be alone
my former disciples? Yes, I should be alone
about the great table, I should be alone
in my own house, I should be alone calling
the disciples. And therefore you must be
daily in the temple of God, waiting daily at
his table, and coming to the great ordi-
nances of the gospel. And the reason you
come, it is he is gentle and affectionately
with understanding and grace, in the fear of
God and from love to him; you will be the
more welcome and the more beloved of Christ;
like John the youngest disciple, and his reason
I have told, who leaned on his bosom at his
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